

Does Home Life of Mills Hold Clue to Murders?

Milton V. O'Connell, formerly of the Sun and Herald-Tribune, reporter longest assigned to the Hall-Mills murder, today continues a series of articles analyzing the crime for GRAPHIC readers. Mr. O'Connell spent four months at the scene of the double slaying, during which time he made a thorough study of the mystery.

His article follows:—



M. V. O'Connell

By MILTON V. O'CONNELL

What sort of a life did Eleanor and "Jimmie" Mills lead in the little wooden house on Carmine Street, before the choir singer was murdered?

Eleanor Reinhardt Mills was a pretty young girl when Jimmie married her. Of seven sisters (Marie, Elsie, ulu, Augusta, Emma, Anna and Eleanor), she was the most spirited. Of German descent, some of her relatives stated openly that Eleanor could be a "mean troublemaker" if she wanted to. But above all, the woman was kindly, patient and—as the letters to her lover showed—tender and lovable.

Let it be said that aside from her affair with the rector, Eleanor Mills was a good wife, in that she kept her home and her children well, considering the limited circumstances. This fact, in view of "Jimmie" Mills's lack of appreciation, his continual grumbling and fault-finding, eventually caused several flare-ups from Eleanor Mills.

"Jimmie" knew of the situation existing between the minister and his wife. He saw some of the letters, though he declares he did not read them. He rebuked his wife and was told she was the one who was the boss. She even struck him several times. She threw

pieces of bric-a-brac at him, as he cowered by the kitchen stove and sink. These are facts established by credible witnesses, persons who would have no ulterior motive in saying such things. Eleanor Reinhardt's vituperation was directed at her husband many, many times. His was a sneering attitude toward her.

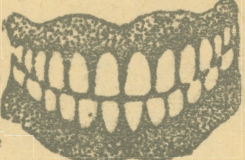
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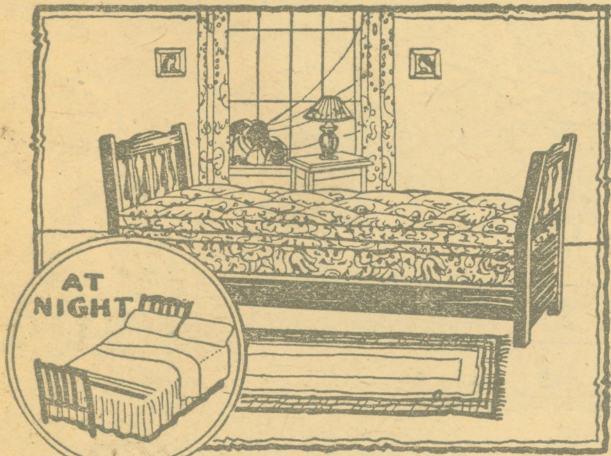
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"Jimmie" Mills was the butt of the comparison between his own shabby self and the idolized minister who was taking the love of Eleanor Mills. "If you were any kind of a man you would do good as he does," she told "Jimmie" on one occasion when they engaged in a bitter argument over the rector.

Mills knew his wife met the rector, not only out toward De Russey's Lane, but that they took clandestine automobile rides together to Metuchen and other nearby towns.

He knew they telephoned each other from a certain drug store not far from the Mills home and that Mrs. Mills was called to the telephone door to answer many times. He told some one, after the mur-

der, that if he had acted differently or done something sooner the killings might not have happened.

He told me after the burials: "The first thing the authorities should have done was to fire both families into the coop until they had found out what they wanted to know about the whole blamed thing. . . . But I've got nothing to hide and I'll tell them all I know."

"If He Had Known"

Mills, on October 25, 1922, said to me:—

"If I had even had an inkling of what was going on, you can bet your life I'd have gone to the church and exposed the whole thing. If that didn't do any good, I'd have gone to the bishop and

there'd been some action, and it wouldn't have gone on a week much less a year or more. You know I never suspected or knew a thing wrong of Hall."

Mills has now admitted he did know "what was going on."

About the letters, he said to me then: "I didn't have an idea that man was writing to my wife, and naturally I wouldn't go snooping around her stuff to look for any letters."

His wife wrote that "he" was watching her write. Who was "he"?

According to the police and general belief, "Jimmie" Mills is not the type who could commit a

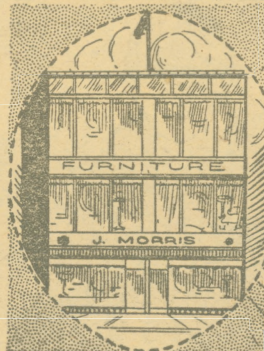
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